**Quality and innovation: two key words for the school of change.**

The National and European political institutions and civil society as a whole, since a long time, are asking for a more active role of the school in a changing world.

In fact, globalization and the competition between the major political and economic powers, require young people to be more prepared and better equipped to face the challenges posed by macroeconomic systems and an information society.

The needs are so many and urgent that they involve, directly or indirectly, the educational and training institutions, that are called on to have an active role to provide answers to these pressing needs, in order to ensure growth and development in the countries in which we live in.

The change required today, however, cannot be a simple change of external appearance but a real and profound change inside the school, designed to influence positively the education of young people in a meaningful way.

This means that the "new" demands to be based on the quality of the interventions that are planned as part of an ongoing innovative research that meets the real needs and socio-cultural development of the society in which the economy and finances cannot be an end in themselves, but they must contribute to the respect and individual growth of each person. In this context it is necessary to retrieve the values ​​for which the school operates and in which the school puts itself in a continuous change. This, in my opinion, should be one of the pillars on which to support the change.

It seems right to me that a long-lasting response to human needs besides those of the society, should refer to the founding values of the educational process. Today the school is not called upon only to teach but also to teach how to learn. It means to educate and train young people for the challenges, helping them to look for all the keys to understanding the socio-economic reality. The key, as a serious school nowadays wants, should be based on the values promoted by the European and International human rights treaties, which are the foundations of coexistence between people and the different spheres of society. The continuous changes of the school should be not just a technical and educational process, but first of all it should be a process of education in the full sense of the concept of "education", founded on these international values.

A second pillar on which innovation should be based, remains the studying of the needs of local growth, which, in a context of globalization requires a more pressing link with the world around us and influential on a local level: which in our case is a European level and, in a more general, but real, perspective a world-wide level.

In this situation, it is of utmost to apply of the concept of "locally and globally" which can therefore give to the educational effort the real dimension asked today of “Education and Training”.

A third pillar to ensure quality and innovation in the school is that the school itself, seen as a single unit, should become a place of quality and innovation. It’s not enough, in my opinion, to promote quality and innovation in teaching if the school, as a place of life for the students, does not prove that it’s itself a structure of quality and innovation.

It's the case, for example, of the introduction of information technology in the school teaching plan. If this is just aimed to teach, and not the fundamental change in the way of being a school… If the introduction of new technology does not change the way of being a school, even in the internal management, in administration or in the transparency of documents and reports, and in the involvement of families, or in the relationship with students, or moreover, in contact between Europe and the world, how can you convince young people that quality and innovation are not just empty words, but are facts that help you to manage the present in a better way, looking towards the future??

This third pillar, the educational institution that applies on itself quality and innovation, is another element of credibility for the school and it is the completion of the context in which we want to make that change.

Defined, in my opinion of course, is the triangular frame in which we must operate to promote quality and innovation, studies and experiences take shape to let that quality be the promoter of innovation.

This is the reason why I refer to a beautiful project funded by the European Commission entitled Q4I: Quality for innovation.

All the actors involved in this project deeply believe that the school should become and keep on being a workshop to promote quality and innovation and have developed a way to get there. This way has “a sign” (Manifesto for a innovative and qualified school) and this sign is made of concrete experiences reached during the course of the pilot project (reference: Project Title: Quality for Innovation in European Schools; Project Number: 527906-LLP-1-2012-1-ES-COMENIUS-CMP). The project approach is based on the elements and conditions scientifically studied and endorsed by the common experience of participants through diligent and accurate work that lasts for two years. The aim of the project is to involve European schools in the process of quality and innovation, offering a scientifically studied and tested path. In addition, the project provides the opportunity for schools that want to, activate difficult processes, but paying in terms of training, to build a network and work together and build with each other the future development of common experience.

"The consortium Q4I believes that innovation in education can improve the quality of the approach in school management and at the same time, a "quality assurance" could increase innovation in learning within the improving process of the scholastic system and in everyday life."(Manifesto of the project).

This seems to us the main challenge facing the school nowadays and that's why we address all the teachers and headmasters that are sensitive about the promotion of the role of the school, in order for them to approach the project and decide to enter the network of "Schools of Quality for innovation".

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